



The Association of Environmental Justice in Israel (AEJI)
المنظمة للعدل البيئي האגודה לצדק סביבתי בישראל

Environmental Justice as the 3rd civic movement:

Navigating in space and time – The Israeli Arab Minority Case

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The attribution of the origin of the environmental justice movement (EJM) to the emergence of the American Civil Rights movement of the 1960s is already part of the environmental justice history. In retrospective, EJM has evolving globally by paving milestones reflected by vast scientific publications, unique academic programs, breakthrough policy and legislation and wide grassroots activity worldwide – all constituted a clear call for environmental justice. Yet, although environmentalism and the EJM are related, there are differences.

Environmentalism in general focuses upon the risky impact of human's actions on the environment, where the EJM conceptualizes the work of environmentalism by emphasizing the manner and scale in which adversely impacting the environment in turn impacts on defined population groups. At the heart of 'environmental justice' are social issues of racism and economic inequality.

Therefore, in countries where democracy is jeopardized and the prevailing political situation enables violation of human rights on different background, the realization of the necessity of addressing the environmental issues of minority and low-income groups, are highly dependent upon active and sustained engagement from both the government and civil society, and inclusive attitudes are crucial for understanding how to advance environmental justice.

The article will present examination of 3 recent case studies in Israel via this perspective:

- a) The planning rights of the Arabs following governmental report for planners, where different minimal of green area per capita is recommended to Jewish and Arab communities.
- b) New plan of train routes, diverted the planned track away from large Arab population of about 200,000 people in Wadi Ara region.
- c) An Arab village plan to expand was blocked by the largest Nature conservation organization in Israel, although only 1.6% of the nearby man-made forest is going to be built. "... It turns out that the nature conservation organization is more sympathetic to wild animals than to Arabs" (Odeh Bisharat , Haaretz, February 2018).

Those cases are analyzed with reference to empirically research of AEJI (2015) on the inequality and the level of environmental hazards. The 'Environmental justice' has examined by constructing a database for all local councils in Israel, with aim to draw practical conclusions. The findings clearly indicate that Environmental *injustice* is identified with Arab towns and villages, noticeable in socio-economic clusters that particularly lower, and provide solid basis for opening discussion of the role EJ plays in the current public discourse and ongoing weakening of environmental decisions making process.